

Climate and TKs Workgroup (CTKW)

The Third National Climate Assessment issued in May 2014 contained a chapter dedicated to the impact of climate change on tribal peoples. In light of the increasing recognition of the significance of traditional knowledges (TKs) in relation to climate change, a self-organized, informal group of indigenous persons, staff of indigenous governments and organizations, and experts with experience working with issues concerning traditional knowledges. The CTKW felt compelled to develop a framework to increase understanding of issues relating to access and protection of TKs in climate initiatives and interactions between holders of TKs and non-tribal partners.

A set of Frequently Asked Questions and a [Primer on Climate Change and Indigenous Peoples](#) that provides foundational information on relationships between indigenous peoples and the federal government in the context of climate change are also available.

Primer: <https://climatetkw.wordpress.com/primer/>
FAQs: <https://climatetkw.wordpress.com/about-2/>

About the Guidelines

The Guidelines are intended to be an informational resource for tribes, agencies, and organizations across the United States interested in understanding traditional knowledges in the context of climate change.

The Guidelines do not advocate the sharing of Traditional Knowledges. They support respect for the sovereignty of tribes and safeguards through free, prior and informed consent with careful consideration of risks and opportunities. The right not to share is affirmed. Federal rules and processes should ensure that funded projects do not require sharing traditional knowledges outside of tribes. The CTKW does not collect traditional knowledges.

Download and comment on the TK Guidelines: [here](https://climatetkw.wordpress.com/guidelines/)

Guidelines for Considering Traditional Knowledges in Climate Change Initiatives

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Climate and Traditional
Knowledges Workgroup

<http://climatetkw.wordpress.com>

Guidelines for Considering Traditional Knowledges in Climate Change Initiatives

These guidelines have been developed to examine the significance of traditional knowledges in relation to climate change and the potential risks to indigenous peoples in the U.S. for sharing traditional knowledges in federal and other non-indigenous climate change initiatives. These guidelines should be used to inform the development of specific protocols in direct and close consultation with indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples in the U.S. include federally-recognized tribes, with whom the United States has a Trust responsibility to, state-recognized indigenous peoples (such as state-recognized Tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations), and unrecognized indigenous peoples and indigenous communities in the U.S. Additionally, federal agencies have government-to-government consultation obligations towards federally-recognized tribes. Each group of indigenous peoples could interact and participate with federal and non-indigenous climate change initiatives in ways that involve TKs. The guidelines are intended to be provisional.

Guideline 1. Understand key concepts and definitions related to TKs.

Guideline 2. Recognize that indigenous peoples and holders of TKs have a right NOT to participate in federal interactions around TKs.

Guideline 3. Understand and communicate risks for indigenous peoples and holders of TKs.

Guideline 4. Establish an institutional interface between indigenous peoples, TK holders, and government for clear, transparent and culturally appropriate terms-of-reference, particularly through the development of formal research agreements.

Guideline 5. Provide training for federal agency staff working with indigenous peoples on initiatives involving TKs.

Guideline 6. Provide specific directions to all agency staff, researchers and non-indigenous entities to ensure that protections for TKs requested by tribes and knowledge holders are upheld.

Guideline 7. Recognize the role of multiple knowledge systems.

Guideline 8. Develop guidelines for review of grant proposals that recognize the value of TKs, while ensuring protections for TKs, indigenous peoples, and holders of TKs.

Principles for Engagement

These principles are intended to guide the motivation, character and intent of collaborative climate initiatives undertaken by government agencies, research scientists with tribal communities, and TKs holders.

“Cause No Harm”

Identify and avoid risks that could lead to loss of or misappropriation of Traditional Knowledges

Free, Prior and Informed Consent

Free: Ensures procedural fairness in negotiations.

Prior: Ensures that indigenous peoples should be involved from the beginning. For undisclosed TKs, prior refers to a process to obtain consent before it is accessed.

Informed: Ensures substantive fairness in negotiations and emphasized the need to address costs and benefits, risks and opportunities.

Consent: Ensures that processes for obtaining consent should first affirm the right of indigenous peoples to decline to engage in mobilizing TKs for cooperative projects, and saying "no" should have no legal implications for respecting indigenous rights and interests or fulfilling trust obligations.